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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4606
INFO RUHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIAT
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 5944
RUEHB/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 9499
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI IMMEDIATE 0046
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 0580
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIAT 2263
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE 0249
RUEUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2449
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3012
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE 3391
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MANILA 000105

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RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINES WELCOMES ASEAN-RELATED SUMMITS ANEW

REF: A. 06 MANILA 5015

[1](#)B. 06 MANILA 4935

[1](#)C. 06 MANILA 4855

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Classified By: CDA Paul W, Jones, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) In a discussion with Charge on January 8, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo reiterated the Philippine Government's determination to host successful ASEAN-related summits, including the East Asia Summit, in Cebu January 13-15 following their postponement from the original December dates due to typhoon concerns (refs b and c). She reiterated that a key theme of the EAS will be on energy security. She said that the EAS would not discuss WTO/Doha Round, as planned in December, because WTO chief Pascal Lamy would not attend, and he had not advanced any new thinking on the Doha round at the APEC summit in Hanoi, anyway.

U.S. and Regional Architecture

[1](#)2. (C) President Arroyo told Charge she hoped the U.S. would accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, as other ASEAN partners have, even without any intention to take part in the EAS. The 30th anniversary of U.S.-ASEAN ties presented a symbolic opportunity for U.S. accession, she continued, adding that perhaps Secretary Rice could do so at the ASEAN Regional Forum in the Philippines in summer 2007. Speaking more broadly on regional architecture, President Arroyo said that, without U.S. participation, the EAS would not develop beyond its current form. China remained supportive of the EAS, she believed, partly because it offered a forum for talks with Japan and South Korea. Russia wanted to join, but its links to ASEAN remained too weak to justify its participation, since EAS is ASEAN-driven. Pressed on complementarity between EAS and APEC, President Arroyo observed that the U.S. role makes APEC relevant, but APEC's lack of a permanent secretariat might make its follow-up on issues raised in EAS less systematic than ASEAN, which has a permanent secretariat.

Summit Security/Terrorism

¶3. (U) Speaking from ground zero of terrorist activity on the southern island of Jolo, President Arroyo told the press on January 8 that "our fight against terror goes hand in hand with the global and regional effort, and as we face the ASEAN Summit, we would like to assure all our allies in East Asia and beyond that the Filipino soldiery and people are on watch every hour of the day, determined to do their share to defeat terror for a more secure and safer world." Philippine officials have insisted that they are prepared to meet any potential security threats and reassured the summit participants of their safety.

ASEAN agenda

¶4. (C) Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs for Policy Erlinda Basilio confirmed separately to A/DCM that the substance of the summits would remain as originally planned (ref a). The ASEAN Summit itself will focus on "building a community of caring societies," with expectations of adopting a Convention on counterterrorism. Migrant workers will be another important topic, although some ASEAN diplomats in Manila have commented privately that this is mostly a Philippine effort to promote and protect its own Overseas Filipino Workers, rather than a common concern. The leaders will receive recommendations from the Eminent Persons Group on an ASEAN Charter and will task a new group to provide a draft at the next summit, possibly including some enforcement mechanisms. The EAS will likely issue a declaration on regional issues, including Burma and North Korea.

Attendance

¶5. (U) Foreign Ministers of Japan and Australia will miss
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the ministerial sessions set for January 11, but their prime ministers will attend the weekend summits. Timor Leste's foreign minister is still expected to participate in a ceremony acceding to the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, but there is now doubt that the French Foreign Minister will be able to do so. France has formally already signed the TAC, however, according to the French Embassy.

Comment

¶6. (C) The summits have attracted enormous attention in the Philippines, with much preoccupation for how the country, and its second city Cebu, will be perceived by leaders of sixteen key partner countries. The Philippines remains interested in promoting the U.S. relationship with ASEAN and the EAS.

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